

## Re: python & mathematical methods of picking numbers at random

**Source:** <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/Python/comp.lang.python/2004-01/1992.html>

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**Date:** 01/16/04

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Bart Nessux wrote:

> *Paul Rubin wrote:*

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>> *Bart Nessux <bart\_nessux@hotmail.com> writes:*

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>>> *I am using method 'a' below to pick 25 names from a pool of 225. A  
>>> co-worker is using method 'b' by running it 25 times and throwing out  
>>> the winning name (names are associated with numbers) after each run  
>>> and then re-counting the list and doing it all over again.*

>>>

>>> *My boss thinks that 'b' is somehow less fair than 'a',*

>>

>>

>>

>> *Both are the same, as you can see by calculating the probability of  
>> any given name being selected. What is the application, and the  
>> computer environment? You may also need to worry about correlations  
>> in the underlying Mersenne Twister PRNG. If the application is  
>> something where randomness is very important (you're picking winners  
>> for a big lottery or something) then you should use a better RNG.*

>

>

> *We're raffling off crock-pots... that's why I think this is OK for our  
> purposes.*

>

Some will claim you cooked the numbers, even if it is a crock.

Let 'em blow off some steam, but don't chicken out. If you let them stew for a day, they'll soften up and you'll eventually reach a cord.